

HAV Fact Sheet

Hepatitis A Virus (HAV), is one of a family of related DNA viruses that affects the liver.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

Early Symptoms include:

- Low grade fever
- Body weakness/discomfort
- Headaches

Other symptoms may include:

- Muscle pains
- Poor appetite
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Diarrhea, especially in children
- Dark Urine
- Jaundice

TRANSMISSION:

HAV infections are transmitted through:

- Fecal-Oral (transmitted through feces)
 - Oral contact with contaminated object
 - Sexual practices involving oral-anal contact
- Puncture in skin (percutaneously)
 - Sharing needles

RISK FACTORS FOR ACQUIRING HAV:

- Household contacts of infected persons
- Sexual contacts of infected persons
- Persons traveling to countries where HAV is endemic (common).
- Men who have sex with men
- Injection and non-injecting drug users

COMPLICATIONS/CONSEQUENCES:

- No chronic (long-term) infection
- You are immune to HAV after your first infection
- About 15% of those infected will have prolonged or relapsing symptoms over a 6 to 9 month period
- May trigger the onset of chronic autoimmune liver disease
- Accounts for fewer than 10% of all fulminant (severe) hepatitis
- Mortality (likelihood of Death) from HAV is about 0.3%; in people over 40 years of age mortality is 2%

PREVENTION:

- Hepatitis A vaccine
- Immune Globulin (IG) offers short-term protection against HAV if given before and within 2 weeks of exposure
- Always wash your hands with soap and water after using the restroom, changing a diaper, and before preparing and eating food

VACCINE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Travelers to areas with high HAV rates
- Men who have sex with men
- Injection and non-injection drug users
- Persons with chronic liver disease
- Children living in areas with increased rates of HAV

Contact Information:

For more information pertaining to Florida clinical services, sites, and treatment recommendations please visit us on the web at http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/std/clinical/clinical.html or email us at: HSD_STD@doh.state.fl.us.

National STD Hotline

1-800-227-8922 (24 hrs, 7 days a week)

Spanish

1-800-344-7432 (8am-2pm EST, 7 days a week)

Hearing Impaired

1-800-243-7889 (10am-10pm EST, Mon.-Fri.)